

Key Ideas from the Keys to Quality Accreditation Project



Key Idea: Completing the Program Description and Preparing for Validation by Joyce Ruppell, Keys to Quality Staff

The most crucial part of the final tasks of the accreditation process is completing the Program Description and preparing for Validation Visit and Exit Interview. The Program Description (white book) is a compilation of all data and information you have collected in the self-study. It can be completed in several ways. Selected self-study participants can work on specific parts as a group or independently. It may be completed as you finish certain tasks or sections or all at once when all data is gathered. Usually the program administrator or person most in control of information collection plays a major role. Administrators will spend approximately 2-3 hours completing the Program Description provided all data is complete.

Begin by completing Part One, Center Profile. This can be done six months before your validation visit only if you do not anticipate any staff or student changes. We recommend only completing the first six pages, except the staff pattern and schedule, as it is rare that a program does not have any changes in six months. The issue is that you want your Program Description to be as accurate and up to date as possible and yet be able to accomplish all of the tasks in a timely manner in order to submit for your validation visit.

To complete the Program Description, use the three summary sheets for the ECCO Form, Staff, and Family Surveys to complete Part Two: Results of Classroom Observations A-J. Do not fill in the ratings of Center and Validator under Groups. The validator is responsible for doing that when he or she comes. You will need to write a comment for any items you have rated as being less than a three (3). If there is anything unusual about your program, whether you have rated the criterion a three or not, you may want to provide an explanation. For example, if your playground does not have a fence, explain how you have accommodated for safety and how you have enhanced the playground experience for children. Here is a sample "While our playground is not fenced at this time, we have provided each teacher with a Playground in a Box. Each box has jump ropes, sidewalk chalk hoops, cones, bean bags, etc." Then, you may describe that fencing is part of your strategic plan for the future. It is very important to remember that the Program Description is the only "picture" that NAEYC has of your program. Be sure to do everything you can to present as accurate and positive view as possible. Stephanie Glowacki, NAEYC academy co-commissioner advised us that administrator comments in the Program Description are rated as high as validator comments on how criteria are being met or not met.

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